

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

In the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of permanently compressing lumber comprising the steps of:

compressing the lumber which is an air-dried lumber, whose moisture content expressed in percent is 12 wt% or less, the air-dried lumber is accommodated in a compressing die including a male die section and a female die section ~~without preheat treatment~~, the air-dried lumber is ~~one-stage-compressed~~ compressed in the compressing die with compressibility of 50 % or more so as to compress cells of the lumber and increase the density of the lumber, and

dry-heating the lumber in the compressing die, in which the compressed lumber is air-tightly accommodated in the-compressed state, for permanently compressing the lumber.

2. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1,
wherein the moisture content expressed in percent of the air-dried lumber is 5-12 wt%.

3. (Original) The method according to claim 1,
wherein the compressibility is adjusted so as to make specific gravity of the compressed lumber 0.8 or more.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Currently Amended) A method of permanently compressing lumber comprising the steps of:

compressing the lumber which is a porous lumber in which many holes are formed in an edge portion by pine wood nematodes and ~~remarkably reduce density of the edge portion,~~
density of the edge portion is lower than that of a core portion, said core portion having no holes formed by pine wood nematodes, wherein the porous lumber is accommodated and compressed in a compressing die, which includes a male die section and a female die section; and

dry-heating the compressed lumber, whose compressed state is maintained in the compressing die for permanently compressing the lumber.

6. (Original) The method according to claim 5,
wherein compressibility of the compressed lumber is adjusted so as to make flexural rigidity of the compressed lumber 130 MPa or more.

7. (Canceled)

8. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 5,
wherein the compressed lumber is dry-heated, and a non-contact face of the lumber, which does not contact an inner face of the compressing die including a male die section and a female die section, is exposed in the air.

9. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 5,

wherein functional additive is filled in the many holes of the porous lumber.

10. (Currently Amended) A permanently compressed lumber, being formed by compressing and dry-heating porous lumber, in which many holes are formed in an edge portion by pine wood nematodes and ~~remarkably reduce density of the edge portion;~~ density of the edge portion is lower than that of a core portion, said core portion including no holes formed by pine wood nematodes in a compressing die including a male die section and a female die section, and having flexural rigidity of 130 MPa or more, wherein water absorptivity of said lumber is higher than that of a compressed lumber made from an ordinary lumber.

11. (Cancelled)

12. (New) A method of permanently compressing lumber comprising the steps of filling a functional additive in many holes of the lumber, and heating the lumber in a compressed state, wherein the lumber is a porous lumber in which the many holes are formed in an edge portion by pine wood nematodes and density of the edge portion is lower than that of a core portion including no holes formed by pine wood nematodes.